

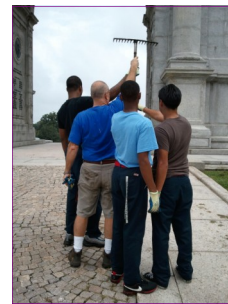


# Volunteer Report 2011

## Valley Forge NHP Volunteer-in-Parks Program Wins National Award

What a wonderful year for volunteerism at Valley Forge National Historical Park! The park's Volunteers-In-Parks (VIP) Program was chosen to receive the Outstanding Program Award not only for the Northeast Region of the National Park Service but also the national award for the best VIP Program in the National Park Service! What an amazing achievement thanks to our Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs), partners, and staff!

We believe our VIP program is exceptional in its broad community reach; its wide range of types of opportunities; and its emphasis on youth and engaging diverse audiences. As part of the park's core goal of incorporating volunteers in a meaningful way into all operations, all park staff and divisions are encouraged to develop new programs or to augment existing programs that meet these objectives. The across-the-board growth in the program demonstrates its strength, and the expanded participation demonstrates its deeper inroads into the community. And we never stop pushing it further.



Park reps receive the Hartzog award in DC. From left: Phil Mulligan, Don Naimoli, John Jarvis, Ernestine White (above). Students from St. Gabriel's volunteer at the Arch on NPLD (left).



## Highlights:

- A total of 2,950 volunteers donated 53,680 hours of service helping with all program areas.
- We greatly expanded natural resource opportunities. Over 9,000 volunteer hours were logged, an increase of almost 45% over FY10. The volunteer base was expanded through working with the Student Conservation Association, AmeriCorps NCCC, Sierra Club, and others. Growth also resulted from new volunteer programs. Our new wildly popular Crayfish Corps program gets kids in the water removing non-native invasive crayfish. Other work included removal of exotic invasive plants; inventorying birds; and establishing and supporting riparian buffers.
- Our public archeology program now in its third year, enabled 69, including numerous family groups, to participate in an excavation adjacent to Washington's Headquarters, working alongside professional archeologists and sharing in hard work, exciting discoveries, and learning.
- Maintenance volunteers assisted with backlog maintenance projects, painting, reroofing, repairing fencing and much more. Through a partnership with Appalachian Mountain Club, trails maintenance and stabilization is conducted by volunteers who donated 500 hours to help maintain 10 miles of the park's 30-mile trail system. Area corporations, schools, and youth organizations assisted with garden maintenance and much more. Lockheed Martin, NOVA volunteers work with staff to help with replica soldier hut maintenance.
- The Living History Program attracted an increased number of youth volunteers through marketing to families and through their participation in "Join the Continental Army," a fun, educational program geared towards ages 10-16. Thirty percent of the volunteers in

## Highlights continued:

- Fifteen members of the National Sierra Club Outing Vacation from across the country came for a one-week service trip to help with natural resources and maintenance related projects. They also get the opportunity to participate in guided hikes, a guided trolley tour, and a behind the scene vault tour and time to explore the surrounding area.
- Tourism Cares gathered some 150 people who volunteered donating an estimated 22,000 in labor cost help planted 300, trees, repair fencing to protect riparian buffers, remove invasive plants and vine, and paint shutters to install on one the park's historic structures and much more.
- Comcast Corporation participates in a volunteer day at the park with over 100 employees volunteering to help with maintenance and natural related projects. Comcast also donated \$ 2,000 to the Friends of Valley Forge Park to help with preservation projects in the park.



### Expanded Partnerships in Support of Volunteering

The Friends of Valley Forge Park stepped up to become both major supporters of volunteerism as a whole at the park and major providers of individual volunteers. FOVFP now provides numerous volunteer-support services, including sponsoring annual stewardship events, recruiting volunteers, providing 10 scholarships for park volunteers to a symposium, and sponsoring a lunch-time lecture series at which volunteer presenters spoke on cultural and natural topics, reaching over 1,000 attendees. The Friends provided support for the park's Living History Volunteer Program and worked with us to develop a living history program presented by volunteers that provides hands-on activities. Members of the Friends themselves contributed over 5,000 volunteer hours to all park programs.

The Young Friends of Valley Forge Park was founded to get young professionals interested in actively supporting the park. They have organized a Youth Fun Run, led volunteer projects during the Martin Luther King Day of Service and National Public Lands Day, and raised over \$700 for park sustainability during a one-day BBQ benefit. The mission of the Young Friends is to support the future well being of the park through volunteer projects, educational programs, and outdoor events by reaching out to the local community and actively seeking new members to strengthen the voice for the park.

We enhanced our partnership with the Schuylkill River National Heritage Area, working with them to recruit and train *Trail Ambassadors* for the park's section of the 27-mile long regional Schuylkill River Trail, which receives 250,000 users per month. Ambassadors hike or bike the trail, providing informal interpretation and safety information, assisting trail users, alerting the park to issues, and leading volunteer clean-up days. We also teamed with SRNHA to plan educational and service activities engaging underserved youth from three area school districts, focusing on volunteer, intern, and career opportunities in the NPS.

Our long-time partnership with the Valley Forge Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CVB) became even more valuable when they took over primary responsibility to manage the seven-day a week volunteer operation at the Visitor Center front desk. The CVB also assisted in the development and maintenance of our new Volunteer Website, (<http://www.continentalchronicle.org/vip/home.htm>), that is sponsored by another partner—the Friends of Valley Forge Park. The site gives volunteers easy access to resources, volunteer work schedules, park news and events, training, and social opportunities that will help them in their volunteer positions and learn of the amazing service that their fellow volunteers is giving the park.

Our partners at REI and Eastern Mountain Sports provided funding, refreshments, and assistance in recruiting volunteers to support our large-scale community stewardship events, National Trails Day and National Public Lands Day, which bring out citizens from surrounding communities and nearby states. In FY2010, over 500 volunteers participated in these events, working with park staff to plant trees, remove invasives, build and repair fences, paint structures, renovate trails, re-roof and repair replica soliders huts, and much more. We started with just 90 volunteers in 2003. Recognizing that these events can be important “entry” experiences in attracting new volunteers, we decided to extensively support the events through dedication of staff time and resources to planning and implementation, and through strengthening partnerships for support and marketing. The result is 600% growth.

### **Implementing the Continuum**

We greatly expanded natural resource opportunities for volunteers. Just over 9,000 volunteer hours were logged, [an](#) increase of more than 45% over FY11. The increase reflects a significant expansion of the general volunteer base for natural resources through engaging with volunteer groups such as the Student Conservation Association, AmeriCorps NCCC, and Sierra Club. It also reflects the development of new volunteer programs based on park goals and needs. Our new wildly popular Crayfish Corps program gets kids in the water removing non-native invasive crayfish. Other work included removal of exotic invasive plants; inventorying birds; and establishing and supporting riparian buffers. We also worked with the major non-profit landholder upstream of the park to share volunteer interns on conservation projects that benefit the conservancy’s lands and prevent impacts in the park.

We developed a new public archeology program and enabled 68 new volunteers of all ages, including numerous family groups, to participate in an excavation adjacent to Washington’s Headquarters, working alongside professional archeologists and sharing in hard work, exciting discoveries, and learning.

Facility Management volunteers assisted with backlog maintenance projects, painting structures, reroofing soliders huts, repairing fencing and much more. Through a partnership with Appalachian Mountain Club, general trails maintenance and stabilization work is conducted by volunteers who donated 500 hours of service to help maintain 10 miles of the park’s 30-mile trail system. Area corporations, schools, and youth organizations assisted with garden maintenance and planted over 200 trees.

The Living History Program attracted an increased number of youth volunteers through marketing to families and through their participation in *Join the Continental Army*, an interactive, fun, educational program geared towards ages 10-16. Thirty percent of the volunteers in the Living History Program now are youth, and they work with volunteers who have been part of the program for 15 plus years. Together they provide substantial assistance to park staff with living history programs, guided tours and special events.

---

---



We want to thank our almost 3,000 volunteers and our partners for helping us meet the mission of preservation and interpretation in the most efficient way and for helping our Volunteer-In Parks program be recognized on a national level.

PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – PA

State Parks Region 4

National Parks Conservation Association

Energy Coordinating Agency, Inc

Audubon Society – Valley Forge

Friends of Valley Forge Park

Green Lane Nature Center

Trout Unlimited

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum

Delaware Riverkeeper Network

South Eastern Search and Rescue

King of Prussia Rotary Club

Boy scouts of America

Girl Scouts of America

Delaware Valley College of Wildlife Society

Christopher Dock Mennonite High School

Verizon Telecom Pioneers

DELVACCA - Johnson Matthey Inc

St. Matthew's United Methodist Church

Saint Gabriel Hall School for Boys

Church of Jesus Chris and Latter Day Saints

Conestoga HS Hockey

Nature Conservancy

West Philadelphia Vineyard Community Church

Southeastern PA Payroll Association

Target - Royersford

Villanova University

Cabrini College

Chester County Intermediate Unit Technical High School

Eastern Mountain Sports

John James Audubon Center

The North Face – King of Prussia

Horse-Shoe Trail Conservancy

YMCA- Berwyn

GOALS –Adventure Racing Association

Signal Seekers

Montgomery County Conservation District

Bryn Mawr Hospital

Zoe Enterprise

YMCA-Audubon

PA Equine Council

Delaware Valley Orienteering Association

West Norriton Police Department

Signal Seekers

Philly Fit

Fast Tracks

Philadelphia Zoo

Bartram's Garden

Wildland Conservancy

Schuylkill Canal

Upper Schuylkill Valley Park Wildlife Center

Pennypack Mills

Delaware Museum of Natural History

Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center

REI

Delaware Valley Appalachian Mountain Club

Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area

Montgomery County Parks & Heritage Services Dept

Ernest Eadeh Enterprise

WholeFoods Market - Devon

Prudential Fox and Roach Realtors

PA Department of Environmental Protection

Lockheed –Martin, Network of Volunteer Association

Starbucks- King of Prussia Mall

Audubon Society – Valley Forge

King of Prussia Rotary Club

Penn State Alumni

GVF Transportation

Philadelphia Outward Bound Center

Glaxo Smith Kline

LexisNexis

Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania

Sierra Club National Outing Volunteer Vacation

Student Conservation Association

Comcast Corporation

Vanguard

Tourism Cares

AmeriCorps NCCC

Sesame/Rockwood Day Camp

Royal Bank of America

VP Performance & Customer Solution Center

Fife and Drum of Yorktown

Once Upon A Nation

Valley Forge Visitor and Convention Bureau

T/E Middle Schools

Iberdrola Renewables